



Los Angeles County
Department of Community and Senior Services
Commission on Human Relations
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Working to Transform
Prejudice into Acceptance,
Inequity into Justice, and
Hostility into Peace

L.A. COUNTY COMMISSION ON HUMAN RELATIONS

COLLECTION OF HISTORICAL MATERIALS

LACCHR has identified the following criteria for selection of the institution to house its collection:

1. The institution's interest in having the Commission's materials
2. Reputation of the institution consistent with LACCHR and its mission and charge
3. Relevance/location of the institution
4. Quality of the facilities in which the materials will be stored (storage facilities)
5. Quality of the facilities in which the materials will be accessed (Special Collections reviewing rooms)
6. Other measures taken to protect the historical materials (who can access them, what level of credentials, are they supervised when reviewing them, etc.)
7. Level of resources willing to commit to make the collection as widely accessible to those who would legitimately seek use of it (through digitization of materials, ease of access to the materials)
8. Level of resources willing to commit to promote awareness and use of the collection
9. Any other advantages for, or benefits to, the Commission (e.g., faculty or students who'll present to Commission members and staff about valuable insights for current issues drawn from the historical materials)

USC Libraries

A Stewardship Proposal to the Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations

The University of Southern California (USC) Libraries offer the ideal home for the records of the Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations (LACCHR). The records will join a wealth of complementary collections on Los Angeles civil rights and social history, and we are perfectly situated to ensure they will reach wide audiences through our university's community outreach initiatives as well as the USC Digital Library, Digital Public Library of America, the L.A. as Subject research alliance hosted by the USC Libraries, and the USC Libraries' active social media presence and media partnerships with KCET-TV and other organizations.

1. The institution's interest in having the Commission's materials

The USC Libraries are extremely interested in acquiring the historic records of the LACCHR to ensure they are preserved for future generations and shared widely, beginning with the USC campus community and expanding to audiences throughout Los Angeles and beyond via our digital initiatives.

The LACCHR records fit perfectly with a number of existing collections and materials already preserved at USC Libraries Special Collections, including those of two former Commissioners, Catherine (Kate) G. Stern (2 linear feet) and Joseph Roos (13 linear feet). In addition, USC has a number of complementary collections related to L.A. civil rights, race relations, politics, and social history. These include our L.A. Riots records (1.5 linear feet) and substantial collections documenting the Rodney King beating and its aftermath, such as the Independent Commission on the Los Angeles Police Department records (aka Christopher Commission, 48.5 linear feet) and the Los Angeles Webster Commission records (50 linear feet). Special Collections also holds a number of smaller collections related to local civil rights issues, and the California Social Welfare Archives, which contains records of many Los Angeles County departments and commissions charged with social reform. Further, the ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives at the USC Libraries holds a wealth of materials documenting L.A. area LGBTQ struggles for equality from the 1950s to the present. We have successfully sought grant funding to process many of the collections listed above and make them more widely available online via finding aids in the Online Archive of California (OAC) as well as digitized photos and records on the USC Digital Library (<http://digitallibrary.usc.edu/>), which recently became a content hub for the Digital Public Library of America (<http://dp.la/>).

2. Reputation of the institution consistent with LACCHR and its mission and charge

The University of Southern California is a world-leading institution of higher education with a 135-year history in Los Angeles. USC's Strategic Vision identifies "global and local engagement" as a core priority for our impactful teaching, research, and outreach initiatives. This core priority reflects USC's long-established roots in our region and L.A.'s unique role as a global city that draws together people and cultures from throughout the world. Over the past century, USC has educated thousands of teachers, social workers, and public administrators

among other service professionals, many of whom choose to reside in Southern California, practice their professions, and help to build and improve our Southland neighborhoods and communities. For more than 70 years, the LACCHR has dedicated itself to improving human relations across the Southland and has worked closely with diverse groups of elected officials, government entities, and community activists to develop effective initiatives to “transform prejudice into acceptance, inequity into justice, and hostility into peace.” We strongly believe that our institutions share common values, and our missions are equally dedicated to the betterment of Los Angeles and society at large.

These shared values are expressed in the USC Libraries’ active efforts to preserve and make accessible collections relating to Southern California social history. Our unique collections strengths in Los Angeles social history are complemented by initiatives like L.A. as Subject, which is an alliance of more than 265 historical collections and archives hosted by the USC Libraries. The alliance is dedicated to making accessible less-visible histories of the Southland and includes many community-based archives like the Boyle Heights Historical Society, the Center for the Study of Political Graphics, the Filipino American Library, the Southern California Library for Social Studies and Research, and public institutions like the Los Angeles Public Library and the County of Los Angeles Public Library. L.A. as Subject (<http://www.laassubject.org>) presents an annual Los Angeles Archives Bazaar at USC’s Doheny Library that draws 1,000 to 1,500 visitors and has launched a number of programs and initiatives that encourage explorations of complex social histories in the L.A. region. The USC Libraries’ L.A.-focused initiatives reflect the close alignment of our mission and values with the work of the LACCHR.

3. Relevance/location of the institution

The LACCHR’s rich records are especially relevant to the University of Southern California and its students, staff, faculty, alumni, and visiting researchers due to our campus locations in South Los Angeles and L.A.’s Eastside. USC has taken an active role in community engagement via initiatives like our Good Neighbors Campaign; Family of Schools, which partners with K-12 schools in the neighborhoods surrounding the University Park and Health Sciences campuses; and the Neighborhood Academic Initiative, which provides a rigorous, 7-year pre-college enrichment program designed to prepare low-income neighborhood students for admission to a college or university. An overview of our university’s many civic engagement initiatives is available at <https://communities.usc.edu>. The USC Libraries plan to develop a grant proposal as part of USC’s Good Neighbors Campaign to bring classes from local K-12 schools to the USC Libraries’ Special Collections to engage with the LACCHR records and related collections tracing human relations across our city’s history. The LACCHR collection would provide a unique set of resources for future USC Libraries initiatives—as part of the USC Good Neighbors Campaign, USC’s Visions and Voices, and other programs—to expand dialog in our campus and neighboring communities about contemporary human relations issues and historic events like the Zoot Suit riots and the events that followed the Rodney King beating.

4. Quality of the facilities in which the materials will be stored (storage facilities)

The Commission’s papers will be preserved in the secure, alarmed, climate-controlled stacks of Doheny Library alongside other important archival collections on Southern California’s social history. Doheny Library is our principal research library serving the University Park Campus,

and it includes a number of features to protect our archival collections, including alarm systems and security cameras monitored 24/7 by USC Libraries personnel and USC Department of Public Safety personnel. In addition, the USC Libraries have robust business continuity plans in place that include measures and resources for protecting our archival collections in the event of natural disasters and other unforeseen events. Our secure stacks for archival collections are in close proximity to our monitored reading room where USC students and faculty, visiting researchers, and the public can freely consult our rare and archival materials. As a result, materials can be paged quickly for use by library patrons.

5. Quality of the facilities in which the materials will be accessed (Special Collections reviewing rooms)

The Horton Rare Book Reading Room (Room 209 of Doheny Library) is the secure, monitored, and climate-controlled reading room for the USC Libraries' Special Collections. The room is staffed by a trained monitor (a student assistant or staff member) and equipped with security cameras that are monitored by Special Collections personnel and USC's Department of Public Safety. Doheny Library also offers 3 dedicated areas for exhibitions featuring rare materials from the USC Libraries' collections. Our exhibition and display areas include secure cases that enable us to feature rare items from our collections in public exhibitions and cultural programs.

6. Other measures taken to protect the historical materials (who can access them, what level of credentials, are they supervised when reviewing them, etc.)

All visiting researchers and other members of the public are required to create online patron accounts with USC Libraries Special Collections and present a university- or government-issued photo identification card during their first visit. Our monitored reading room is staffed with a trained student or staff member, and a librarian is on duty next to the reading room at all times for reference inquiries. If necessary, USC Libraries personnel can summon USC's Department of Public Safety officers for assistance. The reading room is equipped with three security cameras that continuously record all activities in the room.

7. Level of resources willing to commit to make the collection as widely accessible to those who would legitimately seek use of it (through digitization of materials, ease of access to the materials)

We plan on processing the LACCHR records as soon as they arrive at USC in order to ensure timely access. Processing includes foldering and rehousing the records in acid-free enclosures and creating a folder level inventory that will be used to produce a finding aid that will be available on our [website](#) and the [Online Archive of California](#). As our experienced archivists process the collection, they will identify key records, such as the minutes of the commission's early meetings, for digitization along with reports and other collection resources likely to be of greatest interest for researchers and the public. Using internal USC resources or grant funding, we plan to digitize a selection of materials for free online public access via the USC Digital Library (which receives 35,000 unique visitors per month) and the Digital Public Library of America. In recent years, we have received grant funding from CLIR, NEH, NHPRC, and other organizations that support the processing and digitization of collections like the LACCHR records. We are currently seeking grant funding to digitize collections documenting the work of

commissions appointed to investigate the underlying causes of the 1992 L.A. riots, and we would include the LACCHR records in that effort.

In addition, archival materials figure prominently in the USC Libraries' active social media outreach via Facebook and Twitter and our media partnerships with KCET-TV and other organizations. We plan to highlight the LACCHR records through these efforts and L.A. as Subject programs like the Archives Bazaar and multimedia pieces our communications staff creates for KCET-TV (http://www.kcet.org/updaily/social_focus/history/la-as-subject/). Our pieces for KCET-TV have drawn 2 million page views to date, and we are developing a series that will highlight L.A. as Subject member collections while exploring topics in L.A. history.

We will also integrate the LACCHR records with teaching at USC, building on initiatives that have recently been launched by the USC Libraries' Special Collections. For example, Dr. Susan Luftschein developed a Freshman Micro-Seminar for the summer of 2015 based on the 50th anniversary of the Watts Riots, and the LACCHR papers would provide additional relevant material for this course. About 60 micro-seminars are offered during Welcome Week to incoming freshmen, giving students an opportunity to engage with faculty and fellow students about timely topics. Special Collections has used this strategy in the past to connect with students even before they begin their coursework. We have found that engaging with undergraduates early in their time at USC helps to promote Special Collections as a welcoming place for student discovery and research. The LACCHR records will play a significant role in these efforts.

As an early effort to start a dialogue between USC and the community around issues found in the LACCHR records, we plan to create a program to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Watts Riots and showcase the LACCHR collection in fall 2015 once the fall semester gets underway. This would involve a panel discussion in Doheny Library's Friends of the Library Room (on the second floor) open to USC students and the members of the community. For the panel discussion we would invite a representative from the Commission on Human Relations, a community member, and USC faculty member to provide historical context and moderate the discussion. Since Special Collections is steps away from the lecture room, we will display a number of LACCHR records and invite attendees to view the materials following the discussion.

We also plan to develop a proposal for USC's Visions and Voices program, which is the campus arts and humanities initiative funded by the USC Provost's Office, to bring a panel of speakers (including members of the Commission) to campus during the 2016-2017 academic year. The program would discuss the 25th anniversary of the Rodney King Riots with special attention to the Commission's efforts following the riots as well as its current initiatives. As part of this grant proposal we will develop an exhibition that will showcase documents from the LACCHR papers and related collections at USC.

8. Level of resources willing to commit to promote awareness and use of the collection

As mentioned above, the USC Digital Library, Digital Public Library of America, L.A. as Subject, and our media partnerships with KCET-TV and others will be leveraged to raise awareness of the LACCHR records and encourage active public engagement with them. For example, we will display items from the LACCHR records at the Los Angeles Archives Bazaar and create online articles for KCET-TV and other outlets making use of these materials. These efforts have benefited from our active social media presence and cultural programs. As of May 4,

2014, the USC Libraries have 7,989 followers on Twitter and 4,189 Facebook likes. Archival collections comprise a significant part of our public engagement efforts.

We will also integrate the LACCHR records with our instruction efforts aimed at USC students. For example, we will select items from the collection for instruction sessions we offer in USC courses related to American studies and ethnicity, history, public policy, and social sciences. This will provide an ongoing means for encouraging USC students to engage with this collection and learn about the history and mission of the LACCHR and social issues in Los Angeles. We will also partner with our colleagues in the USC Libraries Public Services division who serve departments and schools across campus (e.g., History, Public Policy, International Relations, Political Science) to promote the use of these primary sources to our students and faculty. Each year, we will meet with the faculty member selected to teach the USC Sidney Harman Academy for Polymathic Study's course, Los Angeles: A Polymathic Inquiry, about including LACCHR records in the class. The USC Libraries are the administrative home of the Polymathic Academy, and the course is taught each year by a new USC faculty member who redesigns its focus and content, so we anticipate the LACCHR records can be included in future iterations of the class.

We will also encourage USC students to integrate the LACCHR into their academic explorations via student engagement programs led by the USC Libraries' Special Collections. For example, we sponsor an annual Research Award that recognizes outstanding undergraduate and graduate student use and integration of primary sources to support research findings in papers developed for class assignments. All students who submit papers to the award are celebrated at a reception in Special Collections, and the students with winning papers receive a donor-funded cash prize to honor excellent scholarship using primary sources. Since the LACCHR collection will be used in a variety of courses on campus, we anticipate that numerous future submissions to the Research Award will include research done using the LACCHR collection. These course papers can be provided to the Commission as evidence of how the LACCHR materials are helping students better understand Los Angeles and its dynamic history.

9. Any other advantages for, or benefits to, the Commission (e.g., faculty or students who'll present to Commission members and staff about valuable insights for current issues drawn from the historical materials)

The LACCHR materials integrate perfectly into USC Libraries' Special Collections' active undergraduate instruction and research initiatives, especially our close work with history faculty. With the donation of the LACCHR records to USC Libraries, USC history professors Bill Deverell and Phil Ethington (whose research areas cover the American West and American studies) will have ready access to this collection for their teaching and research. Due to Dr. Deverell's relationship with the LACCHR, we will partner with him and Beth Namei, Reference and Instruction Librarian and the USC Libraries' history liaison. We will develop an assignment that includes a presentation to the Commission by students of their research findings using the LACCHR materials. Using this collection as a springboard for further explorations of social issues in Los Angeles, Special Collections librarians will work with colleagues in the history department to strengthen relationships between the USC Libraries, History Department faculty and students, and the Commission.

Following the donation, Special Collections will remain in regular communication with the LACCHR to share information about collection usage as well as any updates on initiatives or public

programs related to it. As is standard practice with donations to USC, the LACCHR records would be readily available at any time for consultation by members of the Commission.

The USC Libraries' Special Collections look forward to many years of creative partnership with the Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations. Please let us know if you need any further information to assist you with your decision making process.

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